

The Messenger

Volume 2013

Issue 1 *The Messenger*, 2013

Article 39

2013

Lessons from Iftar

Emily Blevins

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Blevins, Emily (2013) "Lessons from Iftar," *The Messenger*: Vol. 2013: Iss. 1, Article 39.

Available at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/messenger/vol2013/iss1/39>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Messenger by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

Lessons from Iftar // Emily Blevins

Peace, understanding, respect--
the feeling is mutual.

She with hair scarved and I, unconcerned.
How will I tell her that my father hates
her, and her father, and her father's father?

We dine together
and speak of change, peace, respect.
The feeling is mutual. And yet,
I cannot help but hear
the taunts ringing in my ears,
racist jokes my father has shared with his friends:
"They want to get blown up. It's in their religion."

While we discuss treaties and peacemaking,
my mind wanders.
She is me, born in a different place.
Would my father hate
me too if I covered my hair
and called another book holy?

Peace, understanding, love--
the feeling is mutual,
between she and I.
I feel I must specify,
the feeling is mutual between she and I
because my father and my father's father
grew up in different times, in a different world
where intolerance, fear, lack of understanding
were mutual.

Blacks and Whites, Jews and Muslims, Christians
and gays,

they did not stop to see themselves in one
another's eyes.

They did not know that these categories--
race, religion, sexuality--

were never part of the Golden Rule.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto
you.

Tonight, she is me and I am her

as our eyes mirror one another's souls. And I

will make no mention of my father,

for that would cast a stone

into the black pools where we hold a piece of
one another.

And our rejection of the mistakes of our fathers' pasts
will be mutual.